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PROFITABLE FIELDS OF INVESTIGATION IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY¹

THERE is a striking sentence in the prologue of Froissart's *Chronicles*, which in the sonorous Tudor translation runs:

It is said of trouth that al buyldynges are masoned and wroughte of dyverse stones, and all great ryvers are gurged and assemblede of divers surges and sprynges of water. In lyke wyse, all sciences are extraught and compiled of diverse clerkes; of that one wryteth, another, paraventure, is ignorant. But by the famous wrytyng of auncient auctours all thyngs is ben knowen in one place or other.

The student of history knows that even if history were not every year in the making and if new archives were not still accumulating, the sources of the past will ever continue to be an inexhaustible repository. The thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns. The point of view changes from generation to generation, and new interests are accentuated. The amount of new-found source material pertaining to medieval history is relatively slight when compared with the mass of inscriptions, clay tablets, pyramid texts, and papyri which have broadened the horizon of antiquity so greatly in the past fifty years, or the vast collections of modern history still unexamined and even uncatalogued in European archives. And yet there is no field of history which will better reward the investigator than that of the Middle Ages, and there is probably no field in which greater progress is being made.

When the chairman of the programme committee invited me to prepare this paper, he expressed the wish that it should consist of a general view of the field in question in relation to investigation, indicating subjects which have been reasonably well worked out, and the lines along which study can at present most profitably be carried on. With your permission, I will reverse the order of these ideas, and consider some lines along which the study of medieval history can most profitably be carried on, for it were an uninteresting task to undertake that of warning people away from unprofitable subjects.

The dean of American medievalists some years ago, in an article which all doubtless know, but which the student of medieval history may re-read with great benefit, because of its pregnant suggestiveness, has said:²

¹ A paper read in a conference of students of medieval history, at the meeting of the American Historical Association in Boston, December 28, 1912.

² G. B. Adams, "Present Problems of Medieval History", *International Congress of Arts and Science*, III. 126-128.

There is no other considerable portion of history, ancient or modern, that has been as yet investigated with such minuteness as that which embraces the history of Europe from the beginning of the fifth century to the end of the ninth, and we may add that, as a natural result, regarding all questions of importance in this field there is now a nearly or quite general consensus of opinion among scholars. . . . In view of this condition of things . . . I should like in all earnestness to raise the question whether the time has not now come when the main force of our vigorous and advancing historical effort should be turned into some other portion of the field; whether scholarly work in the first half of medieval history is not likely to find itself more and more shut up to the study of minute facts, which are, it may be, interesting in themselves, but of no essential influence on the real current of affairs. If this is true, and the students of medieval history continue in the future as they have in the past to spend their chief effort in this field, are we not running some risk of that danger which seems to threaten every science at some period of its history, the danger of the development of a more or less barren scholasticism? . . . Have we not now reached the point in our study of the first half of the Middle Ages when we should expect and encourage, as the next step in advance, constructive rather than analytical work?

Unless this statement be understood to have reference to the larger things of institutional history, I trust that it will not seem captious to dissent in part from this opinion. Admitting the thoroughness of investigation in the case of early medieval history, can we yet believe that this period is so empty of opportunity to do analytical research, or that there is so completely settled an opinion regarding it? Is there not danger of our historical conclusions becoming too conventionalized and too fixed? The history of the medieval Church is one which has been notoriously conventionalized. It seems to me there is danger lest the great scholarship of men like Waitz, Roth, and Dahn compel too ready an acceptance, and our interpretation of early medieval history become too conventionalized under the great weight of their authority. Much analytical work may yet frequently be done and with profit in new study of an old subject. The graduate student may not unnaturally think that the greatest immediate progress will be made by the investigation of new and unexplored subjects, but this is not always so. The actual extent of existing information upon a given subject in and of itself is sometimes difficult to find. I have often thought that a valuable pro-seminar training would be the endeavor to ascertain the present historical status of certain problems and accurately to define that status with a view to further research.

Historical research ought ordinarily to be constructive in its results. I do not mean to imply that there is no room for destructive criticism, for this form of writing is necessary and valuable in its place as a corrective. Yet in the main it is true that historical re-

search ought to be constructive, not destructive. To prove a negative is ordinarily profitless.

The genuinely great product of historical investigation is four-square—its length and breadth and height are equal, and it has weight in proportion. Krumbacher's criticism of Drapeyron's *L'Empereur Héraclius*, "Ein dickes, aber ziemlich luftiges Buch",³ is as terse as it is crushing a judgment. The critical review of established conclusions by careful examination of another's method and criticism, or a new interpretation of familiar sources, may be of more proportionate value to the advancement of history than the investigation of an entirely new subject. The door of early medieval history, I believe, is still wide open to modern "high-power" research, if I may so phrase it, to re-examine evidence and make new valuations and new determinations. One who has read that wonderful fourth chapter in Bernheim is likely to rise from it skeptical of even the most accepted interpretation of events. In other words, old subjects may become new in the light of better methods or a new point of view. For the point of view is often of as much importance as the thing seen from it.

Let me illustrate this by an example falling directly within this circumscribed field of medieval history, between the decline of the Roman Empire and the break-up of the Carolingian Empire. The legislation of Charlemagne would seem to be a subject that has been exhaustively studied, and no document more so than the capitulary *De Villis*. This famous ordinance, from Montesquieu to Inama-Sternegg, has been assumed to have had uniform application to all imperial domains. Kaempfer's *Karl der Grosse* (Mainz, 1910) which gives special attention to economic conditions, assumes the traditional view. Yet during the present year this assumption has been heavily attacked by a German scholar, Alfons Dopsch.⁴ In the course of a searching examination of Inama-Sternegg's classic conclusions, Dopsch denies that the capitulary *De Villis* was intended to apply to the imperial domains in general. He contends that the capitulary was local in its application, and in all probability was intended to apply to Aquitaine only, and that it was issued in 794 or 795 for the instruction of Frank officials who actually administered Louis the Pious's toy kingdom of Aquitaine. Now, while this most recent conclusion must be accepted with caution, it yet seems to me to show that we cannot accept too unreservedly the view that "regarding all questions of importance in this field there is now a nearly or quite general consensus of opinion among scholars".

³ Krumbacher, *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Litteratur*, p. 1074 D.

⁴ Dopsch, *Die Wirtschaftsentwicklung der Karolingerzeit*, part I. (Weimar, 1912).

So fundamental an historical matter as the separation of the East and West⁵ in the fourth and fifth centuries is still full of obscurities. It is easy to use broad generalizations and point to the antagonism of culture, institutions, language, and the influence of religious variance. But the *actual detail* of this slow process of separation is still an unwritten chapter, the constructive writing of which cannot be done until patient preliminary analysis has been made.

If we go back into the history of the Church in the third and fourth centuries, the same state of affairs obtains. Much of our understanding of church history in this period is still unemancipated from tradition, and in many particulars we have not advanced far beyond Ruinart and Tillemont. Even admitting that the erudition of these scholars enabled them to be independent of the lodestone of ecclesiastical tradition, or the coercive influence of church authority, nevertheless their critical apparatus was a clumsy instrument when compared to the edged tool of a Scheffer-Boichorst, a Wattenbach, a Julien Havet, or a Léopold Delisle. Church history in the centuries lying on either side of 300 A.D. still embodies much that is venerable and conventionalized, awaiting new analysis. Let me give a case in point, that of the Edict of Milan. Seeck has assembled strong evidence to show that the so-called "Edict of Milan" was not actually an edict at all, but a letter addressed by Constantine's colleague Licinius to some official in the East enjoining him to see that the Edict of Galerius was enforced.⁶

I refrain from attempting to tabulate a list of the old wines that might be put into new bottles. Such a list would be merely a matter of opinion. But—voicing the opinion of others—as to profitable and unworked subjects of investigation in the early history of the Church, Harnack has mentioned two and Bury one.

1) The technical side of the spread of early Christian literature has not yet been investigated.⁷

2) Little attempt has yet been made to collect the opinions of Christians as to the personal character and regulations of the various emperors, although ample material lies in the Apologists, Melito, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Eusebius, etc., as well as in the Sibylline Oracles and the Apocryphal Acts.⁸

Since Harnack indicated this subject, two theses have partially

⁵ *E. g.* the diffusion of Latin as the language of administration in the East in the fifth century; see the declaration of the bishops at the Council of Ephesus in 431 (Mansi, IV. 1282) and that of Chalcedon in 451 (Mansi, VII. 54 and 455).

⁶ *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XII. 381 ff. But compare the reply of Görres, *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 1892, pp. 282 ff.

⁷ Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, I. 376.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II. 43, note 3.

covered it, one in French, the other in German,⁹ but the whole body of apologetic literature yet remains to be studied.

3) The ecclesiastical policy of Justinian is still a field for research.¹⁰

No one needs to be told that some of the richest results in medieval research in the last thirty years have been in the field of economic history. In some subjects, the American medievalist has an advantage over his European confrère, because, if he has imagination, he will discover that there are certain events in his own history that will enable him to visualize the history of the Middle Ages more clearly than they. He ought to have keener historical perception of their nature and operation. In 1893, in his memorable paper upon "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", Professor Turner quoted the words of the Italian economist Loria: "America has the key to the historical enigma which Europe has sought for centuries in vain."

An admirable illustration of this is to be found in German history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Lamprecht has pointed out that the great deed of the German people in the Middle Ages¹¹ was the expansion of the German race eastward over the Slavonic nations and the making of three-fifths of modern Germany. The significance of the frontier in conditioning the history of Germany in the Middle Ages was little less than the significance of the frontier in shaping American history. But there is no German writer who has perceived it with the vividness with which Professor Turner has set forth the influence of American western expansion. The reason is not hard to find. The European frontier is a fortified line, an artificial barrier, running through densely populated regions. The stages in Germany's eastward expansion and the formative processes which made that expansion have largely become obliterated. In the United States west of the Alleghanies, the history of this process is still intimately associated with family and personal history. Men are yet living whose grandsires settled Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, whose fathers made Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. To the American the history of the making of the great West is still a vivid personal and family history. To the German scholar the history of the making of the Northeast is an academic question. The German pioneer is seven hundred years removed from the students of Berlin

⁹ Dennery, "Les Sentiments des Chrétiens à l'égard de l'Empereur d'après les Acta Primorum Martyrum et Selecta de Dom Th. Ruinart", *Positions de Thèses de l'Université de Paris* (1896); Morawitzky, *Die Kaiseridee in den echten und unechten Märtyrerakten der Christenverfolgungen des Decius* (Breslau, 1909).

¹⁰ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (ed. Bury), I. introduction, p. lx.

¹¹ Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*, III. 349.

and Leipzig. The American pioneer is less than a century's distance from the American scholar of to-day, and is not yet a wholly vanished factor.

This parallel between American westward expansion and German eastward expansion in the Middle Ages is not a fanciful one. With scarcely more than change of dates and proper names many of the paragraphs in Professor Turner's essay may be applied to German medieval history. The line of the Elbe, Oder, and Vistula rivers as clearly demarked the eastward expansion of Germany as the "fall line" of the Atlantic seaboard, the Alleghanies, and the Mississippi delimited the formation of the West. That "return to primitive conditions in a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development of that area", which is so manifest in American expansion, is just as true of the history of the German border. The stages of transition are identical—from cattle-raising and swine-herding to farming, to commerce, to manufacturing. In the time of the Ottos, the Saxon peasant fed his cattle in the plains of the Elbe and Saale rivers, and the Thuringian herded swine on the pine-slopes of the Harz. The cowpens were not far from the town life of old Franconia—Mainz, Worms, Speyer, as they were near the "fall line" in the colonies when tide-water cities like Baltimore, Richmond, and Charleston had become staid communities. Erfurt, Hallstadt, Forchheim, Priemberg, Schesel, Magdeburg, were fortified trading depots with the Wends like forts Granville, Shirley, and Bedford in Pennsylvania, Cumberland in Virginia, Chiswell on the Great Kanawha, and Prince George above the Saluda. These German fortified towns were often built on the site of former Slavonic villages, as Indian villages were occupied over here. Beyond these posts the German pack-trader, with whom furs were an important article of trade, threaded the Slavonic wilderness as his American successor pierced the Alleghany watershed into the plains of Kentucky and Ohio.

The Franconian period witnessed the transition of Lower Germany from cattle-raising and barter to a more settled agricultural régime and an awakening trade. The war of investiture, which fell so heavily on Saxony, changed its pioneer simplicity and plain social texture. Saxony was feudalized after the manner of Franconia, Swabia, and Bavaria. The result was that the hardier spirits "trekked" eastward to new lands, leaving the great manors of Church and noble, which had supplanted the Saxon free-farmer, to be farmed more intensively by Flemish and Dutch colonists used to deep ploughings in the heavy soils of the Low Countries, who were imported by Henry the Lion and Adolph of Mecklenburg.

As "the most significant thing about the American frontier is that it lies at the hither edge of free land", so one of the most striking things about the medieval German frontier is that it lay at the edge of feudalized land. I do not mean, of course, to say that Brandenburg was not a feudal state; but the conditions, institutional and social, varied so much in degree between Brandenburg and the rest of Germany, that a certain parallel between the borderland of Germany and our own western lands can be made. The rectangular survey has a certain prototype in the rectangular *mansus regalis* of the East German border, which was adopted in place of the complex manor of older Germany, with its demesne, its strips of glebe land, and dividing "balks".

East of the Elbe, the village was laid out in a long street with houses on either side; behind the house, in a single rectangular tract, stretched the homestead lands—first the fields, then the pasture land, and behind these the wood-lot. This manner of settling new tracts spread to other parts of Germany later in the Middle Ages—into Upper Bavaria, the Black Forest, the Odenwald; nearly one-quarter of Silesia was so colonized, as later the marsh lands between the Oder, the Wartha, and the Netze. But the whole system goes back to the Dutch settlers first established in 1106 along the North Sea littoral¹² and in clearings in the Franconian forest, and then *in extenso* in Brandenburg. A charter of Albert the Bear¹³ mentions these manors of Dutch measurement—*mansos Hollandriensis dimensionis*. The contention of Mr. Douglas Campbell that the rectangular survey here in America was derived from the Dutch may be doubted. But there is a striking analogy in practice and results between this manorial rectangular survey, undeniably of Dutch origin, which obtained in medieval Brandenburg, and our own system of public land survey.

There are other details also of German frontier history that ought to be more luminous to the American student of history than to the German. When the silver mines of the Erzgebirge were discovered in 1171 there was a rush from the older mining region of the Harz that resembled the gold fever of '49 and carried the German frontier at a bound to the Upper Elbe, as the American frontier leaped the plains to the Pacific. The salt springs of Hallstadt and other places in Germany conditioned expansion and

¹² See the charter of the Bishop of Hamburg (1106) to "certain people called Hollanders", in Altmann and Bernheim, no. 68. The grants measured "720 royal rods long and 30 royal rods wide", approximately 13½ acres. For Flemings in Austria see the charter of Leopold VI. (1208) in Reich, *Select Documents*, p. 265. The literature is indicated in Schwind-Dopsch, *Urkunden* (1895), p. 38 ff.

¹³ Riedel, *Die Mark Brandenburg*, II. 51.

settlement, as those of the Kanawha, of Kentucky, and of southern Indiana influenced the westward movement of American pioneers between 1780 and 1820. The colonies of Flemings and Hollanders established in lower Saxony in the time of Henry the Lion and in Brandenburg by Albert the Bear, the Angle colony about Merseburg, the settlements of Saxon miners in the Bohemian mountains, and the sixteen free "Zips" towns founded in the Hungarian Zipser-Erzgebirge were woven into the texture of medieval German society as the Dutch of the Hudson, the Germans of the Mohawk, and the Palatine Germans of the Shenandoah Valley and Piedmont have been merged with the American people.

When commerce and trade became established along the Oder and Vistula, and the fair of Frankfort-on-the-Oder rivalled that of Frankfort-on-the-Main, the German possession of Wollin at the mouth of the Oder and Danzig at that of the Vistula, which belonged to Denmark, was just as important to eastern German trade then as it was to the United States to secure Mobile and New Orleans to protect our own western trade. The problem and the conditions were not unsimilar.

Again, everyone knows the particularism which characterized central and western Germany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and that it was largely absent in Brandenburg and Austria. Why? Because they were *border* states. There was less particularism in them for the same reason that particularism in America was strongest in colonies with no Indian problem. There was less feudal caste and more democracy in Brandenburg than elsewhere in Germany at the same time, just as American democracy had its birth in the "New West" of Jackson and Benton. Even in religion a not unremote similarity of conditions produced similar results. Helmold¹⁴ is struck with the revival of missionary spirit on the German frontier where Norbert ministered in Magdeburg and Wicelin in Lübeck, that finds its psychological parallel—not absolute, of course, but relative—in the strong revivalist tendencies observable in the pioneer communities among whom Cartwright labored.

I have spent more time, perhaps, than I should have done upon this subject, but it will not have been done in vain if, by this detailed illustration, I have succeeded in convincing the American student that there are more things in the history of medieval Germany than Riedel and Raumer and Heinemann and Meitzen, or even Lamprecht have divined. He can see what they have not; his historical imagination ought to be quicker than theirs.

But if America has the key to the understanding of the devel-

¹⁴ Helmold, I. 54.

opment of the German frontier, no less have the English in India and Egypt a key to the understanding of the Plantagenet empire which has not yet been used. We lose historical proportion and we shorten English history in regarding English imperialism as a wholly modern thing. Bordeaux was as far from London in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as Bombay is to-day. Making all allowance for the great differences, Guienne was a dependency not unlike India to-day, where Britain learned its earliest lessons in colonial government.¹⁵ Edward I.'s sixteen years' residence in Aquitaine was a period of preparation and a school of political education that may be compared with Wellington's career in India. Think of the numbers of Englishmen then as now in her colonial service; of the problems of administration; of the commercial relation between the two countries. Full treatment of the interior development and external history of Guienne must await the completion of the publication of the *Gascon Rolls*. But there is a wealth of material already indicated in the volumes of the Public Record Office *Calendars* which may be supplemented by much French material.

To use a miner's phrase, there are old "diggings" in history, capable of being newly worked, and many unexplored fields. Every one knows that improved machinery and the cyanide process of ore extraction have revolutionized mining to-day and made profitable use of matter once discarded. So modern historical research, with new and critical editions of the sources, keener criticism; and above all, greater sympathetic imagination, new kinds of interests, new points of view, has extracted new evidence and amassed new information from sources which the old-school historian would have thought exhausted. An illustration of this is to be found in Luchaire's *La Société Française au Temps de Philippe-Auguste*. On page 430 of this work Luchaire, as Mr. Powicke has pointed out,¹⁶ "makes the startling and interesting suggestion that the rural population was much more nomadic, much less sedentary in the days of Philip Augustus than it is to-day. He gives instances of the flight and removal of whole villages. If this conclusion be correct, the author was obviously at the threshold of important economic and social discoveries which might clear up the problem of medieval population"—and it might be added, might even enable us to settle the furious and unabated controversy as to the *homo migrans* of the Lex Salica.

One can never be sure that the last drop has been pressed out

¹⁵ Cf. the remarks of Montagu Burrows, *The Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire* (London, 1886), p. 18.

¹⁶ *English Historical Review*, XXV. 565 (1910).

of the grape. Dr. Cunningham says that "the life of Anskar gives a good many interesting hints as to northern commerce in the ninth century",¹⁷ and refers to chapters 16, 19, 22, 28, 29, and 41. But when I read the life I was surprised that he had omitted three of the most interesting chapters, *viz.*, 20, 24, 27.

Luchaire, Flach, Viollet, Lot, Pfister, Guilhiermoz, Garreau, and others have done notable service in investigating the history of feudal France. But I do not believe that we may say that their findings—even when they all agree, as they do not—are permanent. Conclusions are not final but tentative still. Who will deny that this epoch is imperfectly known? We know little of lay life, especially lower lay life, before the period of the towns, and little enough then. Relations were primitive; conventions oftener oral than written, and little of these remain. Even the written sources give limited information, as of a place at a given moment. They leave in darkness the condition of a great part of the country over years together. A *geographical* classification of the sources would be valuable to show the magnitude of the gaps, and this has not yet been made. In the domain of local investigation historical research is very necessary and very fruitful. National history to-day rests on intensive local research. It is beyond the powers of any one man to sift all the sources of an entire epoch, but a great historian may take of these local quarries of humble workmen and build the materials into the edifice of a history of national dimensions. To take merely one instance—historians of the peasant revolt of 1525 in Germany will never be able to pass over Hirn's little study of the Landtage of the Tyrol between 1518 and 1525.

The field of ecclesiastical institutions in France and England is full of fertile topics of investigation. There are few monographs upon the history of monastic administration in medieval France and fewer still of England.¹⁸ The history of English ecclesiastical institutions, especially in their local workings, is far behind that of Germany and France. The subject of the alien priories of England has been cleared up by Mr. New in a recent dissertation. But how many more remain! In England the reign of John saw the beginning of the lay rector. But what of the origin and practice of the office and the process of its decline? A similar query arises as to rural deaneries in both England and France, especially in the former.

The debris of the Carolingian régime to which feudal France fell heir was greater than is usually supposed, especially in the

¹⁷ Cunningham, *English Industry and Commerce*, I. 52, note.

¹⁸ Luchaire, *Manuel*, p. 78.

region south of Picardy and Normandy, *i. e.*, the old duchy of France, comprising the Ile-de-France, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, the Orléannais, and Poitou.¹⁹ It would be worth while for some one to trace these survivals and assemble the evidence thereof.

The broken threads of the Carolingian system were more woven into the texture of feudal society and institutions than is usually supposed. There is need for scholarship yet to unravel the threads. We know, for example, the status of the *minores* and *mediocres* in the barbaric codes,²⁰ and we meet the same *names* late in the tenth and eleventh centuries. But do they connote the same things? Du Cange fails us wholly on this subject. One turns to Waitz, "that vast and orderly museum of desiccated antiquities", as Mr. Herbert Fisher has characterized it,²¹ and gets little light.²²

Of the *minores* Waitz has not a word. Even Guilhaumez and Flach fail to help. Were the *minores* the least of the feudality? If so, to what rank did they belong? What were their feudal rights and obligations? Or did they pertain, as one of the editors of Richer thinks,²³ not to the noble, but to the servile class? Were the *mediocres* synonymous with them? Or were they, as Poinssignon has hazarded—I think wholly in error—the remnant of the allodial proprietors who were left?²⁴ We must guard against being deceived by the *names* of things. The transformation of Europe between the ninth and twelfth centuries was so great that a monk of the twelfth century avows that, in reading the charters of earlier centuries, he could not recognize the institutions of his own time in them; that sometimes it was impossible to understand the terminology of two hundred years before.²⁵

¹⁹ Cf. the observations of Guilhaumez, *L'Origine de la Noblesse en France au Moyen Âge*, p. 191.

²⁰ MacNeal, *The Minores and Mediocres in the Barbaric Codes* (Chicago, 1904).

²¹ Fisher, *The Medieval Empire*, I. 7.

²² *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, III. 491; IV. 281; V. 188.

²³ Richer (ed. Poinssignon), vol. I., ch. 9, p. 23.

²⁴ Cf. Chénon, *Étude sur l'Histoire des Alleux*, who nowhere entertains this idea.

²⁵ "Ea quae primo scripturus sum a praesenti usu admodum discrepare videntur; nam rolli conscripti ab antiquis et in armario nostro nunc reperti, habuisse minime ostendunt illius temporis rusticos has consuetudines in redditibus quos moderni rustici in hoc tempore dinoscuntur habere; neque habent vocabula rerum quas tunc sermo habebat vulgaris. . . . Quaedam loca scripta inveni, quorum nunc nomina ita sunt abolita, et innotata, ut ab hominibus penitus ignorentur, nedum habeantur." Cited by Guérard, *Prolégomènes, Polyptyque d'Irminon*, p. 502. Compare with this the wise words of M. Paul Lehueur, *Histoire de Philippe le Long*, introduction, p. ix, quoting M. Langlois, "Le moyen âge est si peu immuable, le mécanisme des institutions y est si fréquemment modifié, les mots mêmes y changent si souvent de signification qu'à moins de se complaire dans le vague et dans l'erreur, il est nécessaire 'de le diviser en tranches chronologiques, et

The status of the *minores* and *mediocres* in the feudal period has yet to be defined. If I may hazard an opinion it is that in these two classes we find two examples of that debris of the Carolingian régime to which allusion has been made. The burden of military service in the time of Charlemagne was so great that the emperor, as all know, attempted to graduate it by providing for service from fractions of manors. The same practice obtained in the twelfth century.

In Flanders and Picardy, Anjou, Maine, Poitou, the Orléannais, and Normandy, by the side of the *fiefs de haubert* we find *demi-pairies*, *demi-fiefs de haubert*, and even fractional *roncins de service*, less than half. M. Guilhiermoz has described the feudal practice,²⁶ but he has not carefully determined the categories. I am inclined to believe, but it remains to be proved, that the *minores* and *mediocres* were different degrees of the lower ranks of the noblesse whose feudal aids were fractioned in this wise. But the subject is one of obscurity and ought to be cleared up.

The whole question of the development of modern out of feudal taxation is obscure. Why should French and German scholars be left to study it? That origin is intimately associated in France with the history of the origin of the States-General, which itself is one of obscurity, and in England with the history of the formation of Parliament. Luchaire's opinion that the States-General emanated from the Curia Regis seems as unacceptable as that of Callery, who thinks that the estates were summoned solely to vote extraordinary sums for the king.²⁷

Passing from France to Spain, as Spain was the California of the Roman Empire, so to-day it is the Eldorado of the medievalist—the country whose history is everywhere open to research. Professor Merriman has done a service for American medievalists by his article on "The Cortes of the Spanish Kingdom" in the AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, April, 1911, which draws "the attention of historical students in this country to a field entirely unexplored and of the richest possibilities".

d'étudier séparément de même qu'on n'arrive à connaître l'ensemble d'une région qu'après avoir visité, décrit et mesuré chacun des cantons qui la composent', Langlois, *Le Règne de Philippe le Hardi*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 190-191, 210-213, 224.

²⁷ See Luchaire, "Une Théorie récente sur l'Origine des États-Généraux" in *Annales de la Faculté de Bordeaux*, IV. 50, a review of Callery's article in *Revue des Questions Historiques*, XXIX. 61-119 (1881). At page 224 is Callery's rejoinder to M. Luchaire and at page 234 is the latter's reply to that rejoinder. For a discussion of the relative merits of these views and the indication of a line of valuable research as to the origin of modern taxation see Pfister, "La France sous les Valois", in *Revue des Cours et des Conférences*, XIX. 465-479, 597-604, 684-694, especially pp. 598-599 and 684-685.

In the commercial history of Europe in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, the wine-trade of France and Spain is little less important than the wool-trade. Yet the literature of the wool-trade is large; that pertaining to the wine-trade relatively small.²⁸ The same observation holds good of the fisheries.²⁹ When one realizes how enormous was the consumption of fish in the Middle Ages, not only because of the frequent fasts of the Church, but because it was the poor man's food and could be easily secured and conveniently shipped, the absence of any adequate work on medieval fisheries, especially those of the North Sea, is remarkable. Together with the wool-trade, the wine-trade of Guienne and the question of the North Sea, Channel, and Biscay fisheries were the three economic causes of the 'Hundred Years' War. Yet we know only the history of the wool-trade with any fullness.

The answer to these economic questions would do much to clear up other phases of the history of the time, as for example the question of the commercial factor in England's parliamentary advance in the fourteenth century, and conversely, how far the failure of the French States-General may be ascribed to the destruction of French commerce in the Hundred Years' War and the consequent levelling of the bourgeoisie.

The history of the *douanes* is yet imperfectly known, though there are some good monographs on particular localities. There is abundant material for the study, and the results ought to be valuable. Germany is better off in this particular, where Lamprecht opened the way. In the history of agriculture the same kind of a blank exists with regard to *métayage*. In origin the practice goes back well beyond the eleventh century, and a study of the subject would do much to enlarge our understanding of the manorial régime. Lamprecht has done it for Germany, but France has yet to find her Lamprecht. A work upon the banking activities of the Bardi family of Florence is highly desirable. Unfortunately, the family archives are valueless; so perhaps the completeness of Signor Peruzzi's work upon his illustrious ancestors cannot be obtained. But Yver discovered so much in the Neapolitan archives about the Bardi bankers in

²⁸ There is abundant material in the sources for this subject and much information is to be found in works like Fréville, *Mémoire sur le Commerce maritime de Rouen*; Michel, *Histoire du Commerce de Bordeaux*; Finot, *Relations Commerciales de la France*. But a synthetic treatment of the subject is lacking. The best is Simon, *History of the Wine Trade of England* (London, 1906), vol. I.

²⁹ Cf. Engels, *Die Seefischereien des Baltisch-Skandinavischen Meeres* (Marburg, 1900). An old but good work is Zorgdrager (trans. Resté), *Histoire des Pêches, des Découvertes et des Etablissements des Hollandais dans les Mers du Nord* (1791).

the kingdom of Naples, and Davidsohn so much in the Florentine archives, that one may believe that, with the addition of the archive material in London, Paris, and elsewhere, the history of this famous Tuscan banking house can be adequately written.

Medieval industrial history fairly bristles with questions. Professor Cheyney has pointed out that "no thorough and scholarly description of the craft guilds [of medieval England] exists. On the other hand, a considerable body of original materials is easily accessible."³⁰ Even in Germany, to say nothing of France and England, there is need of a work upon the conflict between the craft guilds and the monastery shops.³¹ One economic cause of the Reformation lies in that competition. The French statute of laborers contains 252 articles and fills 28 folio pages in the second volume of the *Ordonnances*. But it has been indifferently examined, not nearly to the same degree as the English statute, and would repay the investigator quite as fully.

In closing let me say that there is a subject of later medieval history to be cleared up which may prove to have an important bearing on colonial American history. It is well known that many of the medieval guilds, especially in the later Middle Ages, were quasi-religious in character.³² These "pious" guilds were very common in Norfolk. Now the Brownist Separatist movement began in Norfolk and was strongest there. The first Separatist church was established in Norwich. The problem is how far early English Congregationalism was influenced by these religious fraternities. If this influence can be historically established the genesis of New England history will have been pushed back a stage farther into the later Middle Ages. Borgeaud³³ says that "among a hundred statutes of the ancient Guilds of England, which have been collected and published by Toulmin Smith, forty-six are the statutes of pious foundations in the county of Norfolk, and twelve of these belong to the single town of Norwich, the cradle of Congregationalism."

Kindred to this problem is the relation of the merchant guild to the chartered company. If behind the chartered company stood the merchant guild and articulation between the two be found, then a new chapter will have been added to the origins of American institutional history.

³⁰ Cheyney, *Industrial and Social History of England*, p. 73.

³¹ The only things upon this subject of which I know are: Kaser, *Politische und Soziale Bewegungen zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1899); Becker, *Die Wirtschaftsverhältnisse des Westfälischen Benediktinerklosters Liesborn am Ende des Mittelalters* (Münster, 1909).

³² Ashley, *English Economic History*, pp. 139-141.

³³ Borgeaud, *Rise of Modern Democracy in Old and New England* (London, 1894), p. 87, note 1.

I must apologize for overloading this paper with examples drawn chiefly from economic and social history. My excuse is that for the past three years my study has been largely along this line. May I add one more word? Perhaps the most striking characteristic of historical writing during the past forty years has been the fact that the bearing of economic and social phenomena has been so largely recognized. But signs are not wanting that a change is at hand. The writing of history goes through cycles. It may be that the economic interpretation of history will ere long be succeeded by the psychological interpretation. It is in the sphere of medieval history, in particular, that psychological interpretation will find its field of study, and it is to the young scholar that this work will chiefly fall.

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